

*August 5th, 2014*

*PEOPLE for the Kids*

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# A Focus on FOCUS

The PEOPLE for the Kids Coalition is a partnership of parents, educators and owners committed to improving early childhood education for every child and family in New Mexico.

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## Federal Recommendations

- Recommends states pay 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of current market rate
- States may provide assistance up to 225% of Federal Poverty Line
- Families should not spend more than 10% of income on childcare

## New Mexico Reality

- New Mexico pays 29% below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile
- New Mexico provides assistance up to 150% of Federal Poverty Line
- The cost for an infant for family of 3 at 150% of the poverty line is 24%

# Working Parents Association

The working parents association is the foremost organization of parents in New Mexico, fighting for equal access to quality early childhood education.



## Even parents who meet New Mexico's inadequate qualifications are being turned away

*The OLE Working Parents Association has found from interviewing hundreds of parents in the past year, that CYFD has made it their mission to set up as many barriers as possible to stop parents from enrolling their children in state-funded child care programs and to find reasons to kick parents who do have child care contracts out of child care or to deprive them of child care hours they are entitled to.*

CYFD was able to return \$7 million last year that were meant for child care contracts BECAUSE they were so successful at defrauding parents of child care contracts or hours they were entitled to.

According to CYFD officials **at least** 2,000 fewer children are receiving early education because of this.

# Parent Bill of Rights

## Study and Commute Time

Your contract should include enough time to get to and from work or school from your child's center. If you are a student you should also receive enough time to study, complete projects, and use the library. contracts should include time for online line courses as well as those on campus. (8.15.2.11 M)

## 30 Days to Look for Work

If you lose your job, inform your caseworker and you should receive a 30 day contract to look for work. when you graduate you should also have 30 days to look for work (8.15.2.14 B)

## At least 6 Month or Full Semester Contracts

Contracts should be at least 6 months for parents who are employed or should cover the length of the semester for parents who are in school.

## Exemption From Applying for Child Support

If you have a good reason for not wanting to file for child support you can request a good cause exemption. examples of good cause include: having an informal arrangement with other parent to provide for the child, fear of harm or violence if the other parent is contacted, unknown identity of other parent or child support services has closed the case. (8.15.2.13 H)

## Unpaid Child Support Does Not Count Towards Income

Only money that you have actually earned or received should be counted towards your qualifying income. If you have a custody agreement or court order for child support but do not receive that money it should not be included in your income calculations.( 8.15.2.11 E )

## Usted Tiene el Derecho a Recibir Servicios en Español

Esto significa que tiene derecho a un intérprete cada vez que usted habla con un trabajador que no habla su idioma.



# Early Educators United

Early Educators United is a professional organization of educators and staff of early education centers dedicated to improving quality by fighting for the respect and dignity of early education professionals. It is a project of the American Federation of Teachers.



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# Focus in Teacher Retention

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**One of the biggest barriers to quality is teacher turnover.**

- ❖ Why?
  - ❖ Average early education teacher in NM makes \$8.75
  - ❖ No health, retirement or employment benefits
  - ❖ Once licensed a majority leave for public school

# QELA

## Quality Early Learning Association

Representing owners of Early Education Centers in New Mexico

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# Focus on FOCUS

- Issues

- New reimbursement rates will not cover the cost of criteria
- Max group size is financial suicide for centers over 3 stars
- Discourages participation
- Takes too much time from the child interaction and places too much focus on paperwork
- Requires teachers to do extended training with no financial incentive to stay

- Accreditation changes

- Many accrediting agencies are being removed forcing programs to find a new source or go onto FOCUS
- 5 star Focus criteria is supposed to align with NYCE, accreditation, it does not
- Montessori accrediting bodies are not currently recognized and FOCUS discourages “true Montessori” practice

# Example from Guadalupe Montessori

- Affects of Max group size through FOCUS
- FOCUS discourages Montessori values
- FOCUS and AMI accreditation
- What FOCUS forces this high quality program to do

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# Recommendations

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- ❖ Third party oversight of CYFD's implementation of its regulations
- ❖ FIR to determine the cost of meeting federal recommendations including eligibility, parent co-pays and reimbursements rates.
- ❖ An effective multidimensional market rate study that is reflective of the true cost of care.